

Disaster Relief



SOLDIERS and Army civilians responded to numerous natural disasters in 1997, including floods, hurricanes and blizzards.

In January the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, along with Army National Guard and Army Reserve units, fought the most disastrous flood ever to hit California. The Corps spent \$20 million fighting the flood and more than \$100 million for post-flood repairs to damaged levees.

Guard units in the northern plains states spent much of the winter digging out from under a record 100 inches of snow. The blizzards paralyzed the region, killing live-

Photography (clockwise, from left): SSgt. David W. Altom, Kentucky National Guard; George E. Halford, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; Maj. Phil Miller, Kentucky Guard; Jennifer Patrick, USACE, Little Rock District. Digital composition by Paul Henry Crank.



stock and stranding people on the roads and in their homes.

Before the snow melted, USACE began a \$12 million program to limit the coming floods and another \$10 million in damage control as water inundated towns and cities throughout the nation's heartland.

North Dakota and Minnesota National Guard members were on duty through the spring to save lives and undertake cleanup efforts after the residents of Grand Forks, N.D., and East Grand Forks, Minn., were driven from their homes by the rising Red River.

One Army Reserve water purification unit was detailed to the Federal Emergency Management Agency for 60 days. And the Reserve relocated soldiers participating in a water purification exercise

in California to provide additional support.

Guard units in other states also fought floods throughout the spring, helping to rescue people and protect homes and businesses in Oregon, Nevada, Idaho, throughout the Ohio River valley and in Arkansas. Reserve units were also called into the stricken regions to provide specialized equipment and technical support.

When Hurricane Danny hit the Southeast in July, Alabama National Guard units were called up to help clean up some of the estimated \$23 million in damage.

Then, in October, Colorado Gov. Roy Romer sent Guard members into action following a blizzard in the Midwest. Over two days, the Guard troops rescued motorists



from a stretch of highway where 450 vehicles had been stranded and searched for people trapped in snowdrifts.

Meanwhile, Kansas National Guard soldiers airlifted bales of hay to cattle in need of food.